

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17512 191933Z

61

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

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SUBJ: SOVIET STATEMENTS SHUN EXTREME POSITIONS ON ME.

REF: MOSCOW 17350

1. SUMMARY. OVER THE LAST THREE DAYS THE SOVIETS HAVE ACCOMPANIED A CHORUS OF PUBLIC PRAISE FOR ARAFAT'S UN APPEARANCE AND POSITIVE CHARACTERIZATIONS OF HIS SPEECH WITH AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN OF OFFICIAL AND AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENTS PUBLICLY REAFFIRMING STANDARD - AND LESS EXTREME - SOVIET FORMULAS FOR
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17512 191933Z

AN ME SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SOVIET PRESS HAS CONTINUED TO GIVE ARAFAT'S UN SPEECH AND THE UN DEBATE ON PALESTINE SYMPATHETIC COVERAGE AND PUBLICITY TO HAIL BOTH AS A MAJOR VICTORY FOR THE PALESTINIAN AND PLO CAUSE. ALONG THE LINES OF THE FIRST SOVIET ACCOUNTS OF ARAFAT'S APPEARANCE (REFTEL) PRAVDA'S INTERNATIONAL REVIEW (NOVEMBER 17) PRAISED ARAFAT FOR OFFERING "A CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM TO SOLVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM." THE REVIEW ALSO ASSERTED THAT THE UN'S ACTION IN INVITING THE PLO LEADER WAS ITSELF A VICTORY FOR THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND A MANIFESTATION OF THE PLO'S GROWING AUTHORITY FOLLOWING THE RABAT CONFERENCE. IN A SIMILAR VEIN PRESS ACCOUNTS OF REACTION TO THE UN DEBATE AND ARAFAT'S ADDRESS (PRAVDA NOVEMBER 16 AND 17) HAVE FOCUSED ON REPORTS OF BROAD SYMPATHY AMONG UN DELEGATES FOR THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND THE ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME AMONG PALESTINIANS WHICH ARAFAT'S SPEECH RECEIVED. PRESS HAS ALSO CRITICIZED AND DEPRECATED ISRAELI UN PERFORMANCE AND RABIN'S INTRANSIGENCE ON THE PLO.

3. HOWEVER, DESPITE THIS CHORUS OF GENERALIZED PRAISE FOR THE PLO, SOVIET SYMPATHY HAS NOT EXTENDED TO ANY ENDORSEMENT OF ARAFAT'S PROPOSALS. RATHER, PLAY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO SOVIET OFFICIAL STATEMENTS REAFFIRMING TRADITIONAL SOVIET FORMULAS ON AN ME SETTLEMENT. MOST RECENTLY PRESIDENT PODGORNYY AT A DINNER SPEECH FOR THE SHAH NOVEMBER 18 (PRAVDA NOVEMBER 19) VOICED SOVIET BACKING FOR A SETTLEMENT BASED ON (1) WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM ALL ARAB LANDS OCCUPIED IN 1967, (2) SAFEGUARDING THE SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF ALL COUNTRIES OF THE REGION AND (3) PROTECTING THE LEGITIMATE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS "INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION AND STATEHOOD (GOSUDARSTVENNOST)." THE SOVIET-SRI LANKA COMMUNIQUE, THE PRAVDA INTERNATIONAL REVIEW AND TASS'S REPLAY OF MALIK'S UN ADDRESS (PRAVDA NOVEMBER 17) ALL RESTATED SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THESE SOVIET POSITIONS, WHICH CONTRAST WITH ARAFAT'S IN THEIR EMPHASIS ON THE 1967 BOUNDARIES, ON ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SECURITY, AND - IN THE CASE OF THE SRI LANKA COMMUNIQUE - ON UNSC RESOLUTIONS.

4. COMMENT: BY RESTATING IN SEVERAL FORUMS THE ABOVE SOVIET FORMULATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF ARAFAT'S SPEECH, IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 17512 191933Z

APPEARS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS ARE ENGAGED IN AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN TO DISTINGUISH THEIR POSITIONS FROM ARAFAT'S ON THE PROPER BASIS FOR AN ME SETTLEMENT. THIS CAMPAIGN SUGGESTS THAT, AT THIS POINT, THE SOVIETS WANT TO OFFER A CLEAR STATEMENT TO ARAFAT AND THE ARAB WORLD AS WELL AS ISRAEL THAT MOSCOW'S SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR THE PLO DOES NOT EXTEND TO BACKING FOR EXTREME FORMULATIONS ON AN ME SETTLEMENT LIKE THOSE VOICED BY ARAFAT IN NEW YORK.

STOESSEL

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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